

**Amendment to the Abstract:**

Please amend the Abstract on page 26 as follows.

An optical fiber connecting device [[10]] has a pair of holding elements [[44]] which are formed on an actuating member [[16]] and are capable of undergoing elastic deformation as a sheath holding mechanism for securing, to a body [[12]], the sheath portions S of the optical fibers F having uncoated fiber elements C to be held by the fiber-element securing member [[14]]. The holding elements [[44]] form a pair of passages for guiding the optical fibers F on the body [[12]]. The holding elements [[44]] undergo the elastic deformation accompanying the motion, on the body [[12]], of the actuating member [[16]] for closing the fiber-element securing member [[14]], and push and hold the sheath portions S of the optical fibers F in the corresponding passages by utilizing their own elastic restoring forces. Each holding element [[44]] includes a pressing part [[54]] formed at a free end separated away from a fixed end part [[52]], and an engaging part [[56]] positioned between the fixed end part [[52]] and the pressing part [[54]].

~~The optical fiber connecting device can have a reduced number of parts and can provide a stable sheath holding function without being affected by dimensional errors in the constituent parts.~~